

REMARKS

Claim 1 has been amended to clarify the claimed subject matter. Claim 1 has also been amended to include the additional limitations “a seal on the thread, wherein on the bottom of a groove between ridges of the thread there are protrusions configured to keep the seal in place.” Support for this amendment can be found, for instance, in the Specification at paragraph [0010].

Claims 10-16 and 18-20 have been cancelled.

With these changes, claims 1-9 and 17 are pending, of which claim 1 is independent.

Paragraph [0004] of the Specification has been amended to remove the reference to claim 1.

35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejections

Claims 1-9 and 17 stand rejected as being unpatentable over Jungblut (US 2,793,884) in view of Gehring (US 3,856,065). The Examiner acknowledges that Jungblut fails to disclose protrusions on the bottom of a groove between ridges of the thread, but suggests that it would have been obvious to modify Jungblut's joint to include the protrusions of Gehring's locking screw. We submit, however, that neither Jungblut nor Gehring, alone or in any proper combination, disclose or suggest a pipe fitting comprising, among other features, “a seal on the thread, wherein on the bottom of a groove between ridges of the thread there are protrusions configured to keep the seal in place,” as recited in amended claim 1.

Jungblut describes a joint in which the male end of a pipe element, which is provided with a thread, is screwed into the female end of another pipe element, the female end provided with a rubber sleeve (Jungblut col. 1, lines 38-40). The screw-threaded male end is gradually screwed into the rubber sleeve of the female end, and the rubber of the sleeve is progressively deformed by the penetration of the screw thread (col. 3, lines 31-43). Jungblut's joint does not include protrusions; however, the Examiner cites Gehring as disclosing a locking screw with protuberances that could be used to modify Jungblut's joint. Gehring's locking screw has protuberances that, when the screw

is installed, press against and engage with the parent material, locking the screw in place (Gehring col. 1, lines 16-20). For instance, when Gehring's screw is used with sheetmetal, "some of the sheetmetal material 17 is functionally engaged into the locking protuberances so as to lock the screw in place" (col. 2, lines 21-24; see also Fig. 2). If, as the Examiner suggests, the thread of Jungblut's male pipe element was provided with the protuberances of Gehring's locking screw, these protuberances would scratch and damage the rubber sleeve of Jungblut's female pipe element, whereby the connection would not be tight. In contrast, the pipe fitting of claim 1 includes protrusions that are configured to keep the seal in place. One advantage of the pipe fitting of claim 1 is that a tight connection can be achieved (see, e.g., Specification at [0005]). We therefore submit that, even if Jungblut's pipe element were combined with the protuberances of Gehring's screw, a pipe fitting having, among other features, "a seal on the thread, wherein on the bottom of a groove between ridges of the thread there are protrusions configured to keep the seal in place," as recited in amended claim 1, would still not be achieved.

For at least this reason, we submit that independent claim 1 is patentable over Jungblut and Gehring, alone or in any proper combination. Since claims 2-9 and 17 depend from claim 1, these claims are also patentable for at least the same reason claim 1 is patentable.

Conclusion

It is believed that all of the pending claims have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this paper should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this paper, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.


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Page : 7 of 7

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Respectfully submitted,

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